

Address by H.E. Ms. Hagit Ben-Yaakov, Ambassador of the State of Israel to Finland, at the March of Life "Never Again" event in Helsinki on 4 October 2020

Hyvät Ystävät, Dear Friends,

It is a great honor for me to greet you on behalf of the State and the Embassy of Israel. Especially, as it is now my first time to join you in this event as the new Ambassador of Israel to Finland since the end of August.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Dr Kari Teittinen for the kind invitation and all the others for organizing this important gathering.

"Never Again" - is the title of today's event and the reason why we are gathered here in the centre of Helsinki: to stand up together against the dangerous phenomenon of anti-Semitism as well as anti-Zionism as one of its manifestations. Unfortunately, anti-Semitic attacks and hate speech against Jews and Israel are still alive in Europe and in other parts of the world. During the corona crisis, we have witnessed this also in the form of various conspiracy theories against Israel and Jews.

In order to fight anti-Semitism, strong public statements are needed from the leaders of the country to denounce this phenomena. At the same time, words by themselves are not sufficient - but bold actions are likewise important.

I would like to mention one very positive example here in Finland, which is the recent announcement of the Supreme Court to ban the neo-Nazi group called the Nordic Resistance Movement. This is a very significant step and a clear message against any form of anti-Semitism in this country.

As an international community, let's continue to raise our voice and stand up against anti-Semitism, xenophobia and all other forms of hatred. And let's continue to celebrate Life, as we do here today as well. Finally, I would like to thank personally each one of you, our Finnish friends, for being here today and showing your continuing support and love for Israel and the Jewish people. We really appreciate it. Thank you - Toda Raba - Kiitos!